THE MODERN SCHOOLMAN

A Quarterly Journal of Philosophy

MARCH, 1929

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THE MEANING OF PLATO'S *IDEAS*

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THE FOCUS OF SCHOLASTICISM

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SCHOOLMEN AND DOGMATISTS

An Editorial

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THE THREAD AND THE BEADS

FRANCIS P. LEBUFFE, S. J.

Editorial Staff *America* and *Thought*

THERE IS an increasingly manifested desire on the part of many thinkers, both Catholic and non-Catholics, to have an answer to the question: "What has traditional Scholastic Philosophy to offer to the modern mind?" Unfortunately, there has been engendered in the minds of many a sense of aloofness from reality, of an idealistic a-prioricity inherent in the philosophy of the Schoolmen which quite blunts its effectiveness. We ourselves are often puzzled to know just how much we can contribute to the solution of present-day problems.

We scholastic thinkers and the non-scholastic thinkers, above all the men and women "in the field," both see the problems, but our viewpoints are quite different, our approaches quite diametrically opposite. We are largely deductivists: they inductivists. We enter the house of learning, if you will, by the front door; they, by the back door. Surely, since it is a house and not a labyrinthine maze, we ought to be able to meet at some definite place.

We can. Where? Well let us see our differing methods of approach. As deductivists we are rather inclined by training to analyze, e. g., human nature as such—*das Ding an sich*. We take it comprehensively, it is true, but stripped of all that makes a Frenchman French, a German German, an Irishman Irish and an American American. *Demptis particularibus* is the motto that sets our intellectual scalpels and even microtomes to work, and cut and pare down we do until "human nature," sheer, stark and unchanging, stands before us. Then we turn it this way and that, and we use our mental stethoscope and sphygmometer to catch its inner reverberations and the pressure of its essential blood-stream, so that we may find an answer to the question: What is this thing "human nature?" What must it have to be nourished and nurtured unto the fulness of its stature, which is ultimately *moral* stature? What must be its societal environment—conjugal, domestic, political—in order that it may be rounded out into a complete and creditable whole? What societal conditions, *of their nature*, will stunt its growth and bring on moral dwarfism? What others, *of their nature*, will unduly develop it and bring on acromegaly and all the horrid phenomena of animal gigantism precisely there where intellectual and volitional harmony should reign?

These are the questions answered in our entire philosophy, and answered, therefore, from reason alone. Being such, they can be advanced before any body of men. Revelation has no least proof-value in philosophy. It is to philosophy what the red light on the side of the track is to the engineer. The red light does not add one bit of moving power to the engine, but it does tell the engineer whether the switch be open, whether the siding be clear, or whether further advance would mean collision.

From Natural Theology, we find that there is a God, the Creator of all things; from Cosmology, that God created man for His own glory; from Psychology, that this strange thing, man, is "composed of Heaven and mire," composed of matter and of spirit, which is gifted with an intellect that cuts clean through the trappings of things, and with a will that is living and lithe and cannot be whistled to heel unless it wants to come. We learn from Ethics that man's final destiny is not in this life nor in the things of time and sense, but in the complete rounding out of his human nature which is "blessedness" and the happiness consequent thereupon; and we find, too, that it is only by the possession of God Himself that this "complete rounding out" can ever be had. From Ethics, too, we learn, by analysing this human nature, in its essential self with all its accretions gone, that man must worship God; that he must respect human life, his own as well as others; that he must, if he chooses, unite in enduring, single wedlock, and have a true care for his children; that, by very inherent, centripetal force of this unadorned nature, he gravitates, with other men, into the larger societal unit we call the state.

Sheer, clear thinking gives us a splendid diagnosis of this thing "human nature," and thus we have, as deductivists, our panoply of abiding principles with which we can safely go forth to battle with the problems of life.

And what of the inductivists, above all of that valiant army of men and women down in the front line trenches of field research, habit-forming clinics, behavior study, social care work? They are not dealing with human nature in itself, but with the actual Frenchman, the actual German, the actual American. They meet the actual starving woman and children whose lives are warped by the drunkenness of an inhuman wretch. They meet the actual rich whose money can buy the sins they want and who reap so visibly at times rich harvest from their waywardness. They meet the ill-matched man and woman who loathe each other and call loudly for leave to be rid of each other that each may find a more congenial partner. They meet the morons who have married and they find children—maybe sane or maybe witless—and they question for a solution of the consequent domestic problems. Facts, facts, facts. That is what they mass up high—"case" upon "case," each different from the one that went before, each widely a-field from the one that follows—and for all the world it seems like a grand cross-word puzzle, with no least clue where to begin and where to end the untangling.

There we have it—the common meeting-ground. They have the facts, the beads; we have the thread, the principles. Their facts are real, so brutally real at times that, when you handle them, you wonder that human nature could become so soiled, so snarled. Our principles are real, and we look in rightful admiration at the rock-ribbed solidity of our position, tried by the storms of ages, yet lifting their Himalayan height serene above the whirl and roar of time-built things.

The inductivists, often by their own admission, are groping towards a philosophy; we have our philosophy but at times are too aloof in our handling of facts. There should be a fruitful "meeting of minds," and that is the thought that comes uppermost as one thinks over the whole situation. We are *not* theorists. We are emphatically realists. We deal with reality, human nature as we find it but stripped of all that individualizes man from man. Our deductions are as real as the residue left in the test tube when all foreign matter has been cast out, for we use the great test tube of the mind, the syllogism, and purify with the white heat of reason. So let us go to the seminar, to the conference table, to the convention, and help thread the beads of facts until we have truly systematized knowledge, for that and that only is science.

But a word of warning. To thread the beads one must have good, clear mental eye-sight, which is none other than straight, clean-cut thinking. That is the one outstanding asset of a man who has stood the gruelling test of years of scholastic training—the ability to define, which means the ability to let people know what they and you are talking about; the power to "distinguish," which is but the connoisseur's discernment, separating the true from the false; the ease to handle and to search out proofs, which is the intelligent vindication of a position.

It is really remarkable what a response such a method of procedure awakens in those not trained in deduction. To "stand tall," and clearly and fearlessly to point out the thread of principle which must guide all in the solution of a vexing problem is the privilege of us who know the ageless philosophy of the Stagirite. Nay more, it is our duty. The attainment of truth brings the responsibility to broadcast that truth; especially so, when men's minds are hungry and their souls starved as they are these days.

We meet the starving everywhere, though at times they hide their hunger behind a bowl of porridged husks. It was a winter's night, and a lecture had been promised down in the heart of New York's ghetto. There in that little settlement house — all of them after a day of work, and many of them just from an evening in school added on to the day's work — these young Jewish boys and girls, mostly in their later 'teens, sat and listened motionless for one hour to a lecture on Evolution. Then, at 10:30 p. m., an open forum began, and for almost an hour these hungry souls "bore in." "Sir, I am the daughter of an orthodox Rabbi. I have read everything in sight. I am not happy. Is there a God?" With upturned, challenging faces, all were tense in their silence. Again "Sir, where is God?" another girl asked, and the lecturer, who was carried back in thought to a gentle mother's side as his infant mind learned to see God everywhere, looked down in pity at the child who had been orphaned of her God.

Again it is a convention in a great Eastern State, and our boys and girls between 12 and 16 have all been openly libelled as being 100 per cent personally and solitarily immoral, and the further shocking advice has been given in conclusion that we must admit the phenomenon and just caution a care for health. A chill of horror runs almost

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Schoolmen and Dogmatists

SCHOOLMEN, medieval and modern, are frequently and freely accused of dogmatism, and, corollary to this, of hampering the freedom of the intellect by rigid adherence to certain principles, presumably regardless of facts. Dogmatism in this false and popular sense is the assertion of a proposition, to be acceded to in the final analysis, because 'he said so.' We find statements in writers who should know better, that scholasticism 'cannot be called a science for it did not seek to explain phenomena so much as to apply certain absolute rules of conduct to existing conditions,' Such charges, to say the least, are interesting if true.

But be that as it may, if schoolmen be dogmatic, they do not suffer for a lack of illustrious company. The monist who postulates a self-sufficient world and refuses to regard this postulate as debatable because the alternative is a personal Creator, builds up a system of philosophy based on a dogma. Bergsonian intuitions and Alexander's space-time postulates can have their only foundation in the statement of their originator and their proof in the reassertion that without them the system collapses. How shall we classify the agnostic whose scant intellectual furniture clusters around the chill hearth of the single dogma that there can be no known truth and who fulminates his lone dogmatic truth against those bolder spirits who propound what he calls dogma based upon the authority of intellectual analysis and demonstration?

This is not said to belittle the indubitable sincerity, capacity and profundity of individual thinkers. That 'it is not well for man to be alone' is nowhere more true than in philosophy. Even the princely intellect of the Philosopher himself, nodded in considering some questions which now seem clear and simple to the philosophical tyro. How then, shall we expect each individual philosopher, each single intellect to grapple with the whole vast realm of science known through its ultimate causes and considered under its most abstract aspects? We do not expect each generation of mathematicians to develop a new theory of numbers and pass over the multiplication table as a medieval superstitution, yet each new philosopher who throws off the 'shackles of dogma' does almost that in his own field and then has the temerity to discourse dogmatically upon what he regards as fundamental truth, but which should really be prefaced with 'as it seems to me' or 'as I like it.' The saving grace of a sense of humor preserved that genial gentleman and philosopher, William James, from pressing his postulates too far; and he was ever ready to stand off and face his limitations and laugh over his failures.

But should not the scholastic be at least as humble as James? Is it not intellectual rashness for the average professor of scholastic philosophy in the classroom to present as certitudes the 'as we like its' of the schoolmen? The average professor of scholastic philosophy is far from standing alone. The universally accepted common ground of scholasticism is not the product of any single mind however brilliant, nor of any university department however versatile, profound or industrious its members; nor of any ephemeral school of a generation or two. On countless points where the evidence of the known truth does not command assent there is difference of opinion, but there is a solid core which all schoolmen accept. And this solid matter at the heart of scholasticism rests not upon the flimsy structure of one builder but is the work of generations from the 'Metaphysics' to 'Aeterni Patris' and beyond. The formula for this vital kernel contains the residual precipitate of countless intellectual reactions. The girders of this central frame are of tempered steel which has been heated in the crucible of centuries of controversy, and wrought upon the cold anvil of criticism by the heavy hammer of dialectics.

And does not such a central body of 'dogma' trammel the freedom of the mind? Is there no compulsion in this adherence to principle? Man's intellect was made to conform itself to things as they are. In the face of evident facts, or of an overwhelming common authority, assent cannot be withheld without unnatural violence that rends the mental structure and makes the cosmos of reality a philosophical chaos. There is the same compulsion that draws the compass needle to its pole, and the intellectual liner without its philosophical compass will be sunk in a bottomless ocean of ignorance and scepticism or shattered on the icebergs of error. As the huge planets sailing the heavens are held in their harmonious courses about the glowing sun by the invisible power of gravity, so is the scholastic mind held to its basic principles by the brilliance of the truth.

THE MEANING OF PLATO'S IDEAS

JOHN MURRAY
Heythrop College, Chipping Norton, Oxon., England

FOR PLATO the world of reality was that of a number of eternal subsistent forms, and these forms correspond to the content of our general notions. This theory was proposed by him as a solution both of the riddle of knowledge and of the problem of being. We may consider each of these solutions, and had best commence with that of knowledge. Phenomena, he would tell us, or the objects that are being continually presented to our senses, are in a perpetual ebb and flow; they are always "becoming," they never "are;" they are unreal as phantoms that flit before our eyes at nightfall; they are unsubstantial as shadows. The *Ideas* alone can be truly comprehended; we can only be said to know the things of sense in so far as we find in them traces of, or resemblances to the *Ideas*.

Plato had adopted the Pythagorean doctrine that the soul existed in the spiritual world prior to its incarnation in a body. In this pre-natal existence it had contemplated the *Ideas* and enjoyed a vision of God. When united with a body, it has no longer a conscious memory of this vision; this memory is awakened, though in a dim and darkling degree, when the soul becomes aware in the objects that it perceives, of the faint image or reflection of the *Ideas*. Then it begins to remember and to recall its former vision. A man, for example, beholds an action, which he calls just, because it has stirred within him the recollection of that ideal justice he has once seen and appreciated; he now knows again true justice, and in so far as this action reflects that justice, he may be said to know it as just.

And so all knowledge in this life is *remembrance*, and this belief, akin to that which supposes in the mind innate or connate ideas, enabled Plato to insist on a principle, that cannot, even in this age, be too forcibly commended. Education, naturally enough, became for him not precisely the giving or imparting of knowledge but the development of the child's latent faculties, the awakening of its inward powers and interests. It was to be no process of mental "stoking," but an ordered and harmonious unfolding of what lay within.

We must remember, Plato adds as a caution, that not every soul retains and makes use of this power of remembrance. "Souls" he tells us, "do not easily recall the things of the other world; they may have seen them for a short time only, or they may have been unfortunate in their earthly lot, and may have lost the memory of the holy things which they saw there, through some evil and corrupting associations. Few only retain an adequate remembrance, and they, when they behold any image of that other world, are rapt in amazement; but they are ignorant of what this rapture means, because they do not clearly perceive. For there is no light in the earthly copies of justice or temperance or any of the higher qualities which are precious to souls; they are seen through a glass dimly; and there are few, who going to the images, behold in them the realities, and they only with difficulty." (1)

So much for the problem of Knowledge. Let us turn now to the question of being or real existence. Plato asserts, as we have seen, that the *Ideas* alone have real existence, and that phenomena have no reality except in so far as they image and reflect the *Ideas*. This is what is meant by Platonic Dualism, that esential distinction demanded by Plato between the spiritual and temporal worlds, between that which is changeless and that which ever grows and decays, between the "white radiance of eternity" and the myriad restless colours that start and flicker in the world of space and time. Only the *Ideas* have being, they exist in an ideal world, where they abide eternally. Phenomena may only be termed real when they are copies of these higher forms, shadows, as it were, projected on to the screen of time and space. Socrates is a man, Plato would have said, because he embodies an image of the form of humanity or humankind, that subsists in the ideal world; he is a wise man, since he participates in the idea of absolute wisdom; he is good, in so far as the ideal goodness is mirrored in and reflected from his soul.

This theory sets up two worlds opposed to one another, that of the *Ideas* and that of Phenomena. What precisely is the connection between them? Before attempting to discuss this, we must consider some of the interpretations given to the theory by Platonic scholars.

I. It has been suggested that the *Ideas* are just material substances, like the objects of our experience, and that the ideal world is nothing more than a world like our own, imagined as existing somewhere in the clouds and visualized in a quasi-spatial way. This is impossible; it is against the whole trend of Platonic thought. Plato moreover states explicitly that the *Ideas* are not contained in space and time, and Aristotle testifies that this was his master's meaning.

II. If this be rejected, are we forced to the conclusion that they are the products of some intellect, finite or infinite? We may dismiss the suggestion that they are brought into being through the activity of the human mind; they are not, as Stewart calls them, in an almost Bergsonian manner, a discrete series of juxtaposed pieces,—as though we were to "photograph stretches of movement into rest, and having arranged our photographs into sets convenient for future reference, use them as giving points of view to be taken by anyone who would understand and deal successfully with that movement, which, after all, as so understood, is the true reality." This would be reading modern idealistic notions into Plato with a vengeance, notions, moreover, that are expressly excluded as a possible solution in the *Parmenides* by Plato himself. The belief that he

(1) Phaedrus, 250A.

came to regard them in the later *Dialogues* as the thoughts of the creative mind of God is more tempting. Trendelenburg and Stallbaum, as well as St. Augustine, seem to favour this explanation, and it would appear to be the logical outcome of the ideal theory. But, in the absence of real evidence in support of this and the very definite testimony of Aristotle to the contrary, it would be rash to assert that Plato ever so considered them.

III. The true explanation may be simply this — he considered that because our knowledge is obtained through general notions of classes or species and of qualities, which may be applied not merely to one, but to countless individuals, such general notions must possess not only a wider range but also a more real and concrete existence than any material object. He consequently assigned to them an objective existence in the world of *Ideas*, which Aristotle meant to indicate by speaking of them as separate from material things. There they exist as the principles of our knowledge and the necessary conditions, if not the actual causes of the universe. In the earlier writings they are treated largely as formal principles, of which the things of this world are copies or imitations; in some of the later *Dialogues*, the *Sophist* and *Philebus* for example, they take on a dynamic character, and become active and creative agencies, while in the *Timaeus* they are spoken of once again as the divine patterns, on the model of which the creator is said, in mythical language, to have fashioned the universe.

Plato is inconsistent and had perhaps never completely worked out their position in the scheme of things. He subsumes them under the highest *Idea*, that of the good, which he identifies loosely with the personal God of his religious belief, whose existence he takes for granted rather than proves but whose essentially truthful and immutable nature he explains and defends in the *Republic*.

Psychological Determinism In Education

JAMES F. MAGUIRE
St. Louis University

LESS than a quarter of a century has passed since the epoch marking work of Binet and Simon on intelligence tests first attracted the attention of the world. The administration of the tests to some one million seven hundred thousand soldiers during the world's war revealed to American educators the educational possibilities of this newly discovered tool. At present, the intelligence tests are almost universally accepted as a necessary instrument in the work of education. Millions of children have been tested in the United States, Germany, England, and other countries. The books written on the tests are legion, and to the tests and to the interpretations of the vast experimental data they afford the educator, certain far-reaching changes in school policy now being advocated, owe their origin.

It is not the popularity of the tests but the challenge offered the philosopher by some of the unwarranted inferences drawn from their experimental results that accounts for the appearance of this analysis of the intelligence tests in THE MODERN SCHOOLMAN. The tests, or more properly certain conclusions therefrom have introduced into education a species of determinism. More than six years ago Dickson sounded the warning. "It is but natural that a movement that has grown so rapidly and that deals with a problem so intangible as the measurement of intelligence should be mismanaged at times. It has been misinterpreted and misunderstood. Extravagant claims have been made about what could be done by means of the tests . . . The newness of the field, the imperfections of tests, the multiplication of test methods, the credulity of some people and the suspicion of others regarding the value of tests, . . . these facts demand that teachers be instructed in the use of tests and be cautioned concerning the dangers involved." Because his warning and the admonitions of other sincere and thoughtful educators have not been heeded, these 'extravagant claims' have resulted in practices that are not merely extravagant but are directly opposed to the true purpose of education. The rights of the individual are practically denied.

It were folly to deny the proved worth of the tests, and to condemn them absolutely were an injustice. The tests have a definite work which they perform with noteworthy success. They are not, nor in the minds of the serious educators who understand them are they intended to be, a panacea for all educational ills. This paper, then, is not an attack on the intelligence tests. Its purpose is merely to sound once more the warning that thoughtful educators have constantly made against the unwarranted conclusions that uninformed teachers have reached in regard to 'what could be done by means of the tests.'

The main reason for the general misunderstanding of the intelligence tests by the average teacher is that the tests are not measures of intelligence. This is not meant to be Chestertonian paradox but the simple statement of plain fact. It is not the scholastic alone who finds himself opposed to the definition of intelligence offered by the proponents of the tests. In the case of the scholastic, conflict is inevitable since so many of our American educators belong to the Associationist school. However, 'a rose,' we know 'by any other name would smell as sweet.' Certainly, we who admit the arbitrary nature of words cannot refuse to consider the tests according to the definition of intelligence proposed by their authors. But here we become painfully aware of the thorns that protect or conceal this innocent rose. Although each educator has a rather definite meaning for 'intelligence' to date no one of them has been condemned for a lack of originality. After a thorough study of the various definitions of intelligence proposed by Ebbinghaus, Galton, Binet, Titchener, Colvin, Haggerty, Freeman, Dearborn, McDougall, and Terman, Spearman

concludes, 'the reason is now evident enough why all search for the meaning of 'intelligence,' has, even with the greatest of modern psychologists always ended in failure. It is simply that, in point of fact, this word in its ordinary present-day usage DOES NOT POSSESS ANY DEFINITE MEANING . . . Neither its utterers nor its hearers appear to have behind it any clear idea whatever.' The chameleon nature of 'intelligence' is the first pitfall that yawns beneath the teacher who would interpret the tests according to her own concept of 'intelligence.'

What then do the tests measure? Had the designers of the tests limited themselves to a conservative fifty-seven varieties of 'intelligence' there might be a possibility of a solution. Yet there really is no cause for despair. In practice, most educators agree that the tests measure scholaptitude or the ability to do school work. Dickson is of the opinion that 'the intelligence test ought to measure a child's ability to accomplish the tasks of the school.' Though Dr. Terman speaks of 'general intelligence' it is evident that he means ability for school work. Even these seemingly unambiguous statements are not to be understood too literally because they are employed in a technical sense. It would appear that there is no agreement among the educators, and that their meanings must ever remain unintelligible to us. However, in the light of the more or less universal method employed in the standardization, use, and interpretation of the tests, it is quite evident that what one test measures, the others also measure approximately to the same extent. Since the tests measure the combined result of innumerable factors, it is impossible to name this 'something' that is indicated by the test score. We have unequivocal experimental data for the theory that the tests will, under certain conditions, distinguish roughly between 'dull,' 'average,' and 'bright' children. If the child has been performing his school work with a commendable degree of effort, if the teaching has been of average quality, if he is not suffering from some constitutional or emotional disorder, and if other conditions are considered, we can be quite certain that a consistently poor score on the tests is a rather reliable indication that the child is 'dull.' If the score is unusually high, we might safely say that he is 'bright.' Beyond this it is precarious to venture. A difference of ten or fifteen points in the scores may have no significance whatsoever. A difference of thirty or forty points, however, should, in the light of other information concerning the pupil, indicate with fair reliability whether a child is 'dull,' 'average,' or 'bright.' An instrument which has this merit is indeed of real value in the school system. However, the numerous deficiencies of the tests demand that extreme caution characterize the interpretation of the scores.

We shall now consider the deductions that have been made from the employment of an instrument whose purpose or at least whose power is merely to determine the relative 'brightness' of school children. On the assumption that the I. Q. is an infallible norm, children have been advised not to attend high school. If the intelligence test score of the child is only one among many varied criteria of the child's ability to continue education, this counsel may be safely given. In practice, unfortunately, teachers ignorant of the limitations of the tests have denied this opportunity of further schooling to ambitious children. There are many volitional, emotional and physiological qualities (not indicated by the I. Q.) whose presence in an unpromising child makes average achievement in high school quite probable. If the bright child is wanting in these same dynamic qualities he will never rise above average attainment. He should not be urged to go to high school merely because he is 'bright.' The purpose of education was never intended to be the creation of an intellectual aristocracy. The inexperienced teacher who has not witnessed the oft repeated miracle of mediocrity achieving incredible levels of attainment through the driving power of persistent ambitious industry, innocently gives counsel to the child, counsel that is in reality a sentence to the ranks of mediocrity. The nation loses the services of a trained man of character and the individual is denied the opportunity of achieving the reward of his industry because his credulous teacher ascribed preternatural powers to a very inefficient tool.

Dr. Terman of Stanford University is of opinion that the intelligence test can be of real assistance in vocational guidance. Granting that vocational guidance and vocational training are fully justified in the light of a broad philosophy of education, we cannot object to the employment of the tests in the manner Dr. Terman proposes. He has considered the limitations of the tests and has called attention to the irreparable harm that results from an indiscreet and unwarranted belief in their infallibility. When on the basis of the test score alone a vocational advisor shunts off a child into vocational training, an irreparable harm has been done him. Had the advisor been more cautious it is possible that he may have found that even the professions were not beyond the real abilities of the child. Had the words of Dr. Terman been carefully pondered, the advisor would have been more wary in making this important decision. "The saddest as well as perhaps the most common failures in life are due to the selection of a vocation which requires a higher grade of ability than the individual possesses. Hardly less unfortunate is the person whose too modest self-estimate lands him in an occupation that is intellectually beneath him." The realization that it was the decision of his vocational advisor, and not his "too modest self-estimate" will be scant consolation to one who later awakens to the sad but irretrievable fact that he is a failure. When a scholaptitude test is made to give us information on vocational fitness it is evident that in spite of the greatest caution possible, its results will be very unreliable. Qualities of character are not revealed by the I. Q. Many of the qualities that make for success in after life are the explanation of poor scores in the tests. The slow but accurate type is discriminated against in the test. The superficial, shallow mind is favored in a test that demands considerable speed. Since the medal winner is not necessarily the bread winner, vocations should not be selected merely

on the basis of an intelligence test. This is especially true since 'brightness' is a very poor norm of success in after life.

We have considered the merits and some few of the manifold limitations of the intelligence tests. The misuse of the tests, we have endeavored to show, is the result of a total misunderstanding of their purpose by the average teacher. But the teacher is not alone to blame. The proponents of the tests, though men of undoubted genius in the vast work of experimentation are not philosophers. Considering the grave consequences of misinterpretation, we must demand that the experimental data of the intellgence tests be interpreted only in the light of sound philosophical principles. This is the work of the philosopher. American education has too long attempted to do without a philosophy of education, with the sad result that educational determinism and other grave abuses have vitiated the school system of the most universally educated people in the world.

THE FOCUS OF SCHOLASTICISM

JOHN W. STEJSKAL
St. Louis University

UNITY IS essential to art. Much of the dramatic power of the Grecian masterpieces flows from the observance of their canon of the triple unity. A careful study of the masters reveals to us the means they employed to secure this quality. Now it was a definite outline to be carried out in all details; again, some color scheme which they maintained through the various parts; always, it was some touch which lent unity to the work and gave their masterpiece a consistent tone. Surely this can also be said of philosophy, since as we know, a unified philosophical system even though partially false is considered quite an intellectual achievement.

The same is indeed true of the masterpieces produced by geniuses of thought. Their unifying touch was the concept about which they centered their inquiries, which they used as a foundation for their research, and as a link to join together the many apparently irrelevant fragments of thought. Plato had built his philosophy on the idea of the "Good," while St. Augustine, upon that of "Truth." St. Thomas, however, satisfied with neither of these, adopted a more fundamental notion. As a student of the Stagirite it was upon and around the concept of "Being" that he raised his lofty edifice of thought. All his problems he sought to solve in the light of this idea. He made it serve as a key to open hidden chambers of science, as a torch to light his way through difficulties and finally to reveal to him that one Eternal Being which from his very childhood he had been seeking to know. It was much easier for him to organize philosophical findings and effect an universal synthesis since in this concept he included those of Plato and St. Augustine, for being is "one, true and good." As being is a concept of universal application, there is no branch of philosophy in which it cannot be employed, for philosophy endeavors to explain reality, and every grade of reality is being. Everything in as far as it is opposed to nothing falls under this head; on it depend the most fundamental principles; without it there would be no knowledge since even the Divine Ideas imply reality, for nothing cannot be the object of thought.

The skillful weaving of this concept through all his speculations made it possible for St. Thomas to effect his synthesis of philosophy, and bring about, with being as a central focus, the unity so frequently noticed. True, this was no new invention of St. Thomas, as those acquainted with the history of philosophy will, no doubt, remark. Rather, as Msg. Olgiati has put it, it was, "the upshot of all speculations from the beginning of Greek philosophy down to his own time."[1] St. Thomas, however, noted its importance and everywhere pressed it into service, organizing thereby the efforts of preceding philosophers and reducing to order and unity what previously seemed to many an unmanageable jumble of disconnected ideas.

For a better appreciation of this let us trace the influence of that concept through the different branches of philosophy. Epistemology, as we know, is but a study of evidence for the existence of being. Since our ideas are but a conformity of the intellect to a being our knowledge is based upon the fact that there is being. Hence being, or reality, in relation to the intellect we style logical truth, and the firm establishment of this relation, certitude. Moreover, it is in judgments that we find that two ideas are logically one and the same being; whilst in ratiocinations we come to see the extrinsic reason of being, of the less known in what is known already. What we call the five fonts of knowledge are but different ways of arriving at a cognizance of being.

As can be expected, in ontology especially, being is the pivot about which all discussions turn. St. Thomas has well said that man rises from knowledge of being to the reasons for being. Essence tells us what a being is; potency is the capacity of that essence for reality; existence is the fulfillment of that potency. In cause we find revealed the influence which brings a potential being to existence. And what is most important, the very first principles upon which is based all inquisition into truth, those of contradiction and causality, arise from the very idea of being. "The intellect naturally knows being and whatever essentially belongs to being as such, and on this cognition the knowledge of the first principles is founded, that you cannot affirm and deny one and the same thing at the same time, and others [principles] of that nature."[2] Besides, it is from this notion that we get the concepts of individuality, intelligibility, rationality and finality. And so in short all the ideas and principles of Thomistic, and hence scholastic, metaphysics are a development of, and imply the concept of being.

(1) *Olgiati—Key to the Study of St. Thomas, c.I, part* 3.
(2) *St. Thomas Contra Gentiles, II, c.* 83.

Just a glance at psychology will show also there the unifying influence of this principle. There living being, especially man with his manifold activities, is brought under critical consideration and studied in the light of this idea. First of all there is pointed out for us that marked difference between living and non-living beings, then, between the sentient and non-sentient and finally between those that are merely sentient and those that are both sentient and intelligent. When considering the intellect we conclude that being is its formal object. "Being is the first object of the intellect since nothing can be known except in as far as it is being."[3] "The formal object of the intellect is being, just as color is the formal object of vision . . . That under which is comprehended whatever the intellect knows —is nothing else than being."[4] Whilst thus examining the activities of intelligent beings we logically infer the spirituality and immortality of the life principle of man, all the while basing our findings on the concept of being.

When we see how effectively this concept ordered all speculations, produced so great a harmony between them, and led to such logical deductions we do not wonder when we hear that St. Thomas would often get so engrossed in thought that he would forget to partake even of necessary food. Although his own master, Albertus Magnus, and many others held that we cannot prove through reason that the world was created by God, St. Thomas in his cosmological speculations shows that this is not only possible, but in fact comparatively easy if viewed in the light of this idea of being. Cosmology is a study of the nature of beginnings, change, order, and end of beings, the philosophy of the becoming, first of the universe, then of the world, and finally of particular material beings together with a consideration of their qualities.

Ethics, likewise, is based upon this one concept, for ethics is the study of the relation existing between beings, a relation which arises as a result of the different degrees of entity; the relation of the human being to the Infinite Being, to other fellow human beings, and to non-intelligent beings. "For Aquinas there are no judgments that are not being-judgments (existential).—Every action is good in the degree in which it partakes of being, i. e., in so far as it possesses the requisite perfection; while a lack of this being, of this perfection which is its due, constitutes the concept of moral evil.—Our actions are good or bad according as we respect or not the gradation of the relations of the various degrees of entity. Thus man must be subordinate to God because participated being is subject to Being by essence. Men among themselves are bound by relations which are always determined by the nature of being, i. e., by the human person and by the dependence on the will of God. Finally we make use of other beings if, and in so far as, we do not disturb the order called for by the various degrees of entity. An act is subjectively good or bad according as we act with consciousness of such order. Moral evil, sin, is a breach in the order established by the Creator; it consists in trampling upon the value of beings and their coordination in reference to the supreme Being. Goodness and virtue, on the contrary, consist in the observance of the order flowing from the nature of being."[5] Although, as was pointed out, this concept was ever the focus of general and applied metaphysics, it is in theodicy that it plays its most important role. Being there truly is a key that opens hidden chambers of truth. From the existence of contingent beings and a consideration of their characteristics and qualities we come to the conclusion that there is an Absolute Necessary Being. The famous five ways St. Thomas had of establishing through reason that there is a God are but functions of the concept of being. He noted that there were many things in the process of becoming, of caused beings, of contingency, of limited perfection and of order; whence he concluded that since whatever is moved, is moved by another; since the effect always presupposes a cause; since contingent beings presuppose a Necessary Being; since the lower and higher call for the existence of the highest, and since order points to an ordainer, there is a God. Being is the idea that explains the metaphysical nature of God, His attributes, creation and the conservation of things. It can especially be said of theodicy that "the point of departure is being, and the point of arrival is Being, by way of the laws of being."[6]

Thus as Cardinal Zigliara has pointed out, "Being is the focal center where all the rays of the Thomistic system meet and from which they radiate."[7] Throughout his philosophy we find that concept ever the center of Thomas' reasoning. Now since the present day scholastic philosophy is essentially Thomistic and Aristotelean it would be of no small advantage to view and study it in the light of this idea of being. For St. Thomas it proved a guidepost which kept him on the right road, steered him clear of many errors, and lent him an easier approach to truth. May we not hope that it can prove the same to us?

(3) *St. Thomas Opusc. XI De Natura Generis.*
(4) *St. Thomas Contra Gentiles, II, c.* 83.
(5) *Key to the Study of St. Thomas, c. IV, part* 3.
(6) *Key to the Study of St. Thomas, c. III, part* 1.
(7) *Key to the Study of St. Thomas, Introduction.*

THE THREAD AND THE BEADS, *Continued*

visibly through the men and women, all trained social workers, but none makes answer. Then from an old non-Catholic, quite pleadingly: "Will one of the Reverend clergy here present, please tell us something." Still no one arose. But finally answer was made: a denial of the statement as far as Catholic boys and girls were concerned; a definition and an explanation of the "norm of morality," which after all is but the alignment of our actions with that standard which we hold to be the supreme standard of our lives; an accusing finger pointed at those who allowed, in the name of "art," improper shows and dances, and yet did not let boys and girls plead "art" when they were arrested for doing the very things to which they had been openly provoked; a challenge to be logical — either to stop meeting in yearly conventions to discuss juvenile sex delinquency, or to go back home and clean up the stage and the movie and the dance-hall.

Again, a definition of free will, an admission of graded freedom and consequently of graded responsibility, will do much to set minds aright on the problems of delinquency, especially where mental deficiency is present. It will help to make headway against the determinists of the milder sort, when they clearly understand that freedom of will does not mean the freedom to walk through a brick wall if I make up my mind to do so. They will not be so impatient of our position, if they know that we admit a freedom in action ranging from 0 to 100, from necessitated action up to perfect freedom. One of the foremost probation officers of the country said a few years back: "Father, if I could get a man, who knew the doctrine of free will, as you have explained it, to collaborate with me on a book, we could swing the methodology of probation for the next twenty-five years."

There is the field ripe unto the harvest — and yet are we making the effort we should to garner it? It is useless to adopt an "I-won't-play-with-you" attitude. It is folly to stay away and then, when movements are started or laws are passed which outrage right reason, to raise a hue and cry like dogs that stand on their hind legs howling into the night. It is for us to get in and prevent the darkness from coming on by giving of "the light of reason" which is ours. And that light of reason will usually be most welcomed for — barring a few warped minds — its vitalizing light will come gladdeningly into many a darkened corner and will awaken therein a thrill of life that had long been chilled. Most men are natively sincere and the world-old truths fit squarely and snugly on sincerity, and when they see the beads of their finding threaded into a chain of knowledge that will adorn mankind, they are truly and properly grateful. Only—*we must have the thread.*

BOOK REVIEWS

WHITHER MANKIND, a Panorama of Modern Civilization. Longmans, Green & Co., New York, $3.00

ADVERTISED as a symposium on modern civilization, "Whither Mankind," save for occasional minor chords, is a symphony in scarlet and gold celebrating the machine-age, mass-production, and the magical, all-pervasive influence of science. It should be noted that the compilation is a conscious reaction to the pessimism of Keyserling, Siegfried, Gandhi, Spengler and a host of others who, revolted by the hideousness of the factory town, with its brutalization of work and play, deplore the neglect of the finer, spiritual values of life with its consequent absorption in things material and of the flesh. These are the dark shadows upon which Dr. Beard's aesthetes of the new materialism paint their golden image of mankind's new god, the machine, paying it almost idolatrous worship in their rejoicing that it has delivered the world from much toil, political tyranny, superstitious ignorance, and unchecked exploitation of the many by the few. The detailed recital of benefits begot by an application of science to the resources of nature is a proper corrective to the melancholy indictment of Tories, reactionaries, fundamentalists and obscuranti the world over. Mankind owes much to the machine and it is not unfair to assemble competent authorities bearing testimony to this important fact.

Like most advocates, however, the experts summoned by Dr. Beard, belabour and deify their excellent case. Dangerous as it is to take one witness as the voice of all, I am going to accept the opinion of the erudite editor and quote a more or less typical chapter and verse from Dr. Hu-Shih. He says:

"The civilization of a race is simply the sum-total of its achievement in adjusting itself to its environment. Success or failure in that adjustment depends upon the ability of the race to use intelligence for the invention of necessary and effective tools. Advancement in civilization depends upon the improvement of tools."

He who thinks that environment is confined to machinery cherishes, I should think, a one-sided and restricted view of the matter. Besides man's inner adjustments of spirit to flesh, there are at least three other factors which should be considered. They are man's relations to God, his fellowmen and the world of nature. Man's success or failure with tools measures his adjustment to the single factor of machinery. It tells him nothing, except very indirectly, about his progress in dealing with his Creator, his neighbors and things of the visible universe. Bertrand Russell, with a more adequate view of the problem, warns us to use the machine without worshipping it.

The subjects selected by Dr. Beard cover the whole range of human thought and action; his selection of authorities is far from being so happy. Popular writers, rather than scholars or thinkers, abound. This method has given us a very readable, scintillating book; but with too little, regrettably, that is solid or constructive. It will dazzle without enlightening; it will thrill without imparting inspiration; it will flatter without admonishing; it will delight without much instruction. Read Stuart Chase on "Play" for the best satire, George Dorsey on "Race and Civilization" for most courageous speaking among Nordic supermen, Everett Dean Martin for his confession that education is confusion worse confounded and James Harvey Robinson for his bleak discovery of religion without a god. How Havelock Ellis, Carl Van Doren and Hendrik W. Van Loon strayed into this company of immortals is a mystery to the present reviewer. How Belloc, to mention only one, was omitted is equally unintelligible. He might have answered the query implied in "Whither Mankind," a point to which Dr. Beard's pundits accorded the courtesy of silence.

J. F. T.

SPINOZA

The Philosophy of Spinoza — Richard McKeon, Ph.D. Longmans, Green & Co., N. Y., ($5.00)

NO ONE can fail to be in sympathy with Dr. McKeon's purpose in giving us this careful survey of Spinoza's philosophic thought. The wealth of criticism down the years seems to have analysed into dismemberment a philosophic system which our author shows to possess fundamental unity. To bring out this unity in Spinoza, the entire body of his thought is built up into a living whole once more. As much as possible Dr. McKeon quotes from the original works and has Spinoza speak for himself. The result is that the study is presented in as objective form as possible.

In depicting the medieval background of Spinoza's thought, the author does not, we regret to say, clearly enough distinguish between neo-Platonist and Aristotelian theories. Hence there remains some obscurity regarding Spinoza's indebtedness to the various schools of current thought.

The author considers pantheism "a loose and inexact description" of Spinoza's philosophy. Like many such general terms, it is true, this one does not particularize definite details of pantheistic thought frequently recurrent in most of his treatises; but it is a sufficiently correct characterization, as witness statements on pp. 93, 106, 128, 204, 309, et al.

There is no need in the narrow limits of this critique to review Spinoza's system of thought; but we cannot refrain from comment on his "ordo philosophandi," which is so directly opposite to the Aristotelo-Thomist viewpoint. Thomists do not, as Spinoza, "begin with God," but with created things, and from them reason to the knowledge of God's existence and nature. The reason Spinoza adduces for his method of procedure is that the infinite cannot be known or inferred from the finite. God must first be known, and that *a priori;* and then only through Him the things that in some manner proceed from Him.

This procedure is philosophically unjustifiable and unwarranted; for the only way man can reason to the fact of God's existence is by an *a posteriori* argument. No *a priori* proof—Anselm, Scotus, Spinoza to the contrary notwithstanding—has yet demonstrated this truth; for all such arguments labor under the defect either of supposing what is to be demonstrated or of implicitly appealing to the factual.

To assign some reason—other than the influence of Descartes—for this error *in principiis* is difficult and unsatisfactory, unless one accept the theory that "scholastic principles were root and branch infected with error." That there is some ground for this opinion seems clear from the contemporary hostility between the "Aristotelians" and the physicists. The former were surely in error in so fatuously adhering to the exploded theories of Aristotle's physical science; an error arising from their inability to distinguish between the Philosopher's scientific and philosophical tenets. The physicists on the other hand were just as much in error in an opposite direction in that they threw overboard indiscriminately well established philosophical principles along with antiquated and disproved scientific principles. Naturally, then, the physicists set about rediscovering philosophy with tacit and complete rejection of Peripateticism. The sad result is three centuries of philosophizers, and no philosophy.

The neo-Scholastics have wisely corrected the mistaken scientific views of their forbears, the contemporaries of Galileo, in perfect consistency with sound Aristotelian principles of philosophy. The vagaries of modern post-Cartesian philosophy will have no end until there be a return to Aristotelian metaphysics. O. J. LaP.

PSYCHOLOGY

An Introduction to Psychology by Hugh A. Reyburn, M. A., D. Phil., Harrap & Co., Ltd., London, 324 pp. 7s 6d.

DR. REYBURN does not deny that man has a spiritual soul which is the principle of all life and thought in man; nor does he deny the immortality of the soul. He says that the arguments on which it depends may be sound, but psychology knows nothing of a disembodied soul or a life after death. No distinction is made between rational and experimental psychology, for according to this writer, what we know as experimental psychology, is the only one which has any right to the name. Philosophy and psychology must be absolutely divorced or scientific research is impossible.

The book contains a good statement of the physiological aspect of what he calls mental processes, such as instinct and emotion. The author practically accepts James' theory which reduces them to certain constituents "which he maintains an organic and kinaesthetic sensations arising from disturbances of the viscera and from movements of the body." Doctor Reyburn says that these two mental processes, like all mental processes, are something more than the mere constituents which go to make them up. Just what this is we are not told other than that they are mental patterns. But what are mental patterns? They are arrangements or blendings of psychical material. If we pursue this line of questioning we will at last come to the conclusion that all mental processes such as thought, imagination, etc., are reducible to physico-organic stimuli and reactions. This may not be what this author means but it is the most evident interpretation that can be given. Very many of the statements in the book are far from clear, and this fact would lead one to doubt the value of them. For example take some of the following: "Reasoning power and the will in general are abstractions which cannot be trained. Perception is a reaction by an individual to the physical environment in which it is placed." Does this mean that all perception is such? "Recognition, when analysed, resolves itself into what may be called a sense-feeling." "The self is what it does." "In primitive man anger is satisfied by the destruction of the obstacle." "Ideas are not pale abstractions cut loose from conduct."

Prof. Reyburn says that psychology owes a great deal to Freud. "Freud," he says, "has not only given an impetus to the scientific study of a new field, but also has provided a first approximation to its explanation." Still he says that Freudianism repels psychologists by its uncouth terminology, by its unnecessary postulation of new principles and mental entities, by the narrowness of its interpretations, and by the neglect of what has already been established by ordinary psychological investigation.

The general impression that one gets from reading the book is that Dr. Reyburn wishes to be considered a scientific psychologist who is bent on accepting nothing in psychology which cannot be demonstrated by experiment. He does not wish to admit a substantial subject of intellection, and still at times he is right at the point of doing so, and what is more, he practically admits it.

B. J. F.

Psychology in Theory and Application by Horatio W. Dresser, Ph.D. 750 pp. 8vo Thomas Y. Crowell Company, New York, 1924, $3.50 net

THIS large volume is a praiseworthy effort at the coordination of various phases of the extensive and rapidly growing literature on psychology. The five books into which the volume is divided can be made to include practically everything in the field of psychology. Besides the first book on general psychology, a fairly well-developed field, the author has given the high lights of the newer fields of dynamic and abnormal psychology, the applications of psychology in education and the industries, and finally the more far-reaching fields of social psychology and social organization.

The opening book contains the fundamentals of general psychology. In presenting "the most promising teachings from different points of approach" the author has not hesitated to give quite fully the arguments for opinions to which he is personally opposed. His criticism is objective, and whenever there is question of dogmatic rather than scientific opinion, he has the prudence to let common sense be his guide. In referring to the endeavor of the empiricists of some years ago to explain all our mental riches in terms of sensation he reminds us that there has been "no real demonstration that the intellect and will are mere products of sensation in their various combinations, no proof that the will is here muscle sense." Instead of this a priori narrowing of the field of psychology he advocates a view of the behavior of the natural man, and a theory of the whole field of mental life, including attention and interest, imagination, temperament, character, intellect, will. In his chapters on these various phases of the human being Dr. Dresser has presented a stimulating diversity of views. This fact inclines us to disagree with his statement that this first book may be used as a text-book for introductory courses. The student in an introductory course would have neither the knowledge to appreciate nor the perspective properly to appraise and criticise the conflicting and frequently contradictory opinions. For the more advanced student, however, and for one interested in the philosophical implications of the many problems raised, there is abundant food for thought.

"The Psychology of the Hidden Self" deals with the problems raised in abnormal psychology. Here so much is theory, so little is definitely scientific that we could hardly expect the same treatment as is given to general psychology. It is a mere presentation of theories, with some criticism pro and con. The author, while strongly inclining to Freud's theory and method of psychoanalysis, tempers many of Freud's excesses with the common sense which we noted in the preceding section. He sums up his own views on the prophylactic side of psychotherapy thus: "We should have a good job, a good fad, and a good religion."

The "Social Psychology" is somewhat of a departure from the objective viewpoint taken in the preceeding books, and from here on the author seems to be the protagonist of a thesis which is never clearly defined, yet always intruding itself in his summaries and criticisms. That this is most natural we cannot deny, nevertheless some of the conclusions drawn are not only unwarranted but indefensible. The approach and outlook on Social Psychology are broad —"the whole nature of man is the basis of investigation." But when, with regard to the study of crime, we read that we may assume determinism when trying to know the criminal as an individual, we find a broad hiatus in the reasoning process by which this conclusion was arrived at. How can anyone begin a study with a supposition which, by its very nature stands in the way of our arriving at the objective of our investigation?

Another still more dangerous supposition, is in the matter of the psychology of religious experience. Dr. Dresser together with most of the writers he quotes seems to take it for granted that psychology can not only discover the nature of religious experience in its entirety but also pass judgment on the value of the content of such experience. By such an attitude they fail to recognize the fact that the empirical study of religious experience finds only the external expression of what is within the subject studied, or at best a verbal account of something which cannot be adequately expressed in words. Hence, if the subject claims to be under a supernatural influence, since science cannot prove this either impossible or improbable, it can never hope in any adequate way to explain what is distinctly beyond its realm.

It is too bad that an author who has given that very sound bit of advice that our mental health will be safe if we "have a good job, a good fad, and a good religion," now, in his final criticism of the most far-reaching problems involved in psychology, denies any real value to religion by speaking of "undermining the psychological basis for believing in "revelation" as different from so-called "profane knowing," by referring to religion as merely the "conservation of values," and by implying that every educated clergyman is a hypocrite. The author's pragmatic attitude towards religion and morals makes the book a dangerous one in the hands of the uncritical. A. P. M.

BOOKS RECEIVED

Human Values and Verities, Henry Osborn Taylor, London, Macmillan.

An Anthology of Recent Philosophy, Daniel Sommer Robinson, New York, Crowell, $3.50.

Jurisdiction of the Confessor, Rev. James P. Kelly, New York, Benziger, $2.50.

Social Problems and Agencies, edited by Henry S. Spaulding, S. J., New York, Benziger, $2.50.

Christ, the Builder, Msgr. J. L. J. Kirlin, New York, Benziger, $2.00.

The Sanity of Sanctity, Rev. J. E. Moffatt, S. J., New York, Benziger, $1.50.

Prayer and Intelligence, Jacques and Raissa Maritain, New York, Kennedy, 75c.

News and Activities

WITH THE DEATH of Sir Bertram C. A. Windle, cosmologist, archaeologist, anatomist, etc., Scholasticism is deprived of a signal champion. His interests extended over a very wide range of scholarly pursuits and he was in all his activities an apostle and in his own fashion an apologist, aiming always to further the cultural and spiritual aspects of the world's oldest spiritual force: The Catholic Church. Of late years he has been lecturing at St. Michael's College, Toronto. There he was ardently engaged in working out a plan to establish an institute of Scholastic philosophy which would be of international interest. At the same time he was contributing constantly to periodical publications, particularly to the "Commonweal," of which he was an associate editor.

The extent and thoroughness of his interests is evidenced by the books he has published. His early books, especially "The Romans in Briton" and the "Proportions of the Human Body," illustrate his scholarly research in archaeology and anatomy. A more recent work, "The Catholic Church and Its Reaction to Science," forms one of the volumes of the Calvert Series. It was at the height of the late nineteenth century assault upon revealed religion by the exponents of evolutionary science that Sir Bertram cast his forces for religion and for the Catholic Church. In "Church and Science" he stated his own view of the problem.

Born in 1858, he earned several degrees in medicine at Dublin University. After a professorship at Birmingham he became president of Queens College, Cork, and from there he came to Toronto. Though his talents were generously expended during a long life, his death is the more regrettable in view of the fact he held a place so difficult to fill.

A MAN'S efficiency is measured by the facility with which he communicates what he has received during his years of study. This is the principle upon which the Weston Philosophical Academy recently organized, justifies its foundation. Popularizing Philosophy is the object of the Academy, as expressed by Mr. W. L. Lucey, S. J.

At the suggestion of a faculty member, and initiated by a third year philosopher, a group of students convened to discuss the manner and means of the Academy, and determined that it should, after a fashion, fulfill something of the function of a hobby. Popularizing Philosophy means developing and finally acquiring the gift of conversation on the vital doctrines of Scholasticism with people of every walk in life. The Academy will aid all to achieve this highly desirable goal, by stimulating writing and conversation which has this 'popularizing' for its object.

The members gather in round-table fashion. Then a paper is read (not to exceed twenty minutes) explaining some practical question of moment, appending a few suggestions and points for discussion. Then the feature of the evening: the question is on the table and awaits the judgment and discussion of the individual members.

This proves to be an efficient method of arousing and sustaining activity in an attempt to write and talk accurately and intelligently. No two factors are of greater moment in an active and profitable Academy than timely subjects and members well prepared.

THE MODERN SCHOOLMAN congratulates the men at Weston on their success in maintaining these, the two important phases of their enterprise.

THE Right Reverend Monsignor James Hugh Ryan, president of the Catholic University of America, was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws at the university winter convocation of Marquette University, February 21st. The citation referred to Dr. Ryan's interest and eminence in the neo-scholastic movement and also to his achievements in general Catholic education. Dr. Ryan addressed the convocation on the "Neo-Scholastic Movement and Recent American Philosophy." He outlined briefly the aim of the new scholasticism, the problems it has met and those it may expect to encounter in the future. More in detail he spoke of the relation of philosophy to scientific research. "Philosophy today and especially the new Scholasticism," Msgr. Ryan declared, "is ready to accept the achieved result of experimental science but in honor it must claim the right to criticize and evaluate these results. It has seen too many 'sciences' overthrown to be willing blindly to link itself with any particular theory." Scholasticism however, he continued, does not present itself as a mere Ptolemaic, but as a positive system that is ready to take a position on all the great problems which contemporary thought presents for the solution of philosophers. Neo-scholasticism has its own contribution to contemporary living and thinking and is presented and is to be judged as a contemporary philosophy.

Dr. Ryan was educated at the Catholic University of America where he received the degree of doctor of philosophy and, to which seat of learning, he has lately returned as rector. Meanwhile he had been professor of philosophy at the same institution, and editor of the journal of that society, 'The New Scholasticism.' Daniel Summer Robinson, in compiling his 'Anthology of Recent Philosophy,' to be reviewed in THE MODERN SCHOOLMAN for May, asked Dr. Ryan, as a representative American philosopher, to write the chapter devoted to the neo-scholastic movement.